



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Kansas

NEWS RELEASE

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March 11, 2004

THREE ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS FROM PARSONS, KANSAS, CHARGED IN CRACK COCAINE CASE

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced today that **Rita Smith**, 35, **Rowshane Dunn**, 28, and **Vanissa Haggard**, 35, all of Parsons, Kansas, were charged on March 5, 2004, by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Kansas, in an investigation of the distribution of crack cocaine in Parsons, Kansas. **Ronald Kendricks**, 24, Parsons, Kansas, was previously charged on February 5, 2004, in the same investigation.

Melgren said that this was a two and one-half year investigation by the Southeast Kansas Drug Task Force with the assistance of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, FBI, IRS, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Parsons Police Department, Labette County Sheriff's Office, Kansas Highway Patrol, Joplin Police Department, Coffeyville Police Department, Winfield Police Department, and Pittsburg Police Department into the distribution of crack cocaine in Southeast Kansas. The Byrne Grant provides partial funding for the Southeast Kansas Drug Task Force and helps make these types of investigations possible. Assistance was also provided by the Labette County Attorney's Office.

Melgren stated that **Smith, Dunn, and Haggard** were arrested in Parsons, Kansas, on March 9, 2004. They each made an initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Kansas, on March 10, 2004. Smith was released on a \$25,000 bond and is scheduled for a motions hearing on April 12, 2004, at 3:00 p.m. before U.S. District Judge G. Thomas VanBebber. Dunn and Haggard have each been temporarily detained and are scheduled for detention hearings on March 15, 2004, at 4:00 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge James P. O'Hara. Kendricks was previously arrested on February 10, 2004, and made his initial appearance the same day. He has been detained pending trial. Kendricks is scheduled to be arraigned on the superseding indictment on March 16, 2004, at 3:00 p.m.

Smith is charged with five counts of distributing crack cocaine between October 2002 and March 2003; and one count of distributing crack cocaine within 1,000 feet of Garfield Elementary School in Parsons, Kansas, on November 22, 2002.

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Kendricks is charged with one count of distributing crack cocaine on October 29, 2002, in Parsons, Kansas.

Dunn is charged with two counts of distributing crack cocaine on December 19, 2002, and August 12, 2003, in Parsons, Kansas.

Haggard is charged with one count of distributing crack cocaine on March 18, 2003, in Parsons, Kansas.

If convicted, each faces a maximum of twenty years in federal prison, without parole, on each count of distributing crack cocaine. Smith also faces a minimum of one year and a maximum of forty years for distributing crack cocaine within 1,000 feet of a school.

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.